

Oct. 31st., 1962

Hodes had a paper prepared by the Foreign Office on Soviet intentions in Cuba. He asked that this not be referred to as a British government view.

One reason for the Soviet intervention was that Khrushchev saw the need, under heavy pressure from his defense chief, to take a stand ~~in the nuclear missile dispute~~, which the Soviet Union recognises is in favour of the United States. As a politician Khrushchev probably also saw the need to apply leverage for settlement of claims on terms that would enable him to carry out his claims. This is important in the Soviet stand towards China.

The development of bases in Cuba was seen as "a risked to do this... It would also enable Khrushchev to have a future deus ex machina to be used in connection with his visit to the United Nations. The Ukrainian peasant side of Khrushchev may have realised that this was a rather risky business. Perhaps he even opposed it at first. His initial basic miscalculation was to let himself be persuaded.

The Foreign Office thinks that the military persuaded Khrushchev the vital stage was upon landing of the equipment. After that the build-up could go on with impunity, covered by explanations that the whole thing was only defensive.

Khrushchev also miscalculated in thinking that intermediate range missiles would not be discovered by the United States -- or if they were discovered the United States would take no particularly violent action, but would do the U.N. Khrushchev apparently gambled that in the U.N. he could appeal for the support of the non-aligned countries and other committed countries in bringing down any coercive resolution.

The whole plan seems to date from the time of the Gaulle-Buchanan visit to Moscow in April. At that time Khrushchev seems to have been fairly certain about what he wanted to do. He informed no one in the Cuban forces, and partly to frustrate the United States, sought out and arranged to interview with Chipping.

Khrushchev and the Russians seemed to think that the plan was working reasonably well. Now to make doubly sure, they sent Khrushchev to the United States with a solid airbridge.

Then came the final U.S. information that the intercepts were conclusive. In April the return of Castro to Havana, the authorisation of the Cuban forces which had been away with the now defunct forces in Africa, had been commanding him with the most complete and certain knowledge over the U.S. umbrella responsibility of the Atlantic interislands.

In any event the Kennedy announcement of the blockade brought the Soviet Union completely off balance. It is highly significant that the Russian statements immediately appealed to caution. This was an oral, unverified US American administration to say, what

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What was decided about the Cuban crisis? I know nothing about Trujillo or the U-2. It would be nice if we could get some information from the teacher people in the Cuban camp. They seem to have been the most important for negotiations and coordination. This would be if it's supposed to be normal.

Well, they say Khrushchev wanted to do the same but we forced him into

~~what he wanted~~, but it was a dangerous step.

It could have been the first indication to conclude that the Russians were not sufficient to rely upon in their defense. When the United States had given up its bases in Turkey and installed Suez (and made everyone clear that if you threatened to bomb the United States, the situation became much worse for the Russians). This convinced Khrushchev with the possibility of having Khrushchev bomb the United States again, and this he certainly would not do. Hence he cut his losses.

Although the Turkish deal was dropped, there is an oblique allusion to it in the proposal of some sort of agreement between the USSR and the Warsaw pact.

It is significant that since the Cuban crisis there has been no Russian statement on Berlin. There is no indication that the Russians mean to move there soon.

We should not assume that Khrushchev has had an easy time in the presidency. Undoubtedly there was some tension and there are bitter recriminations. Undoubtedly Khrushchev ~~is~~ is still in control, and there is no evidence of an anti-Khrushchev movement, but undoubtedly Khrushchev will be very careful in watching the internal situation.

The Foreign Office does not expect a violent Soviet reaction. Instead, it expects a prolonged period of wounding, and painful rearmament.

Who are the "tough" people in the Presidium? Britain doesn't know for sure. But where is a definitely Tukhachevsky wing left, and Malinovsky (Minister of Defense) may be one of the tough guys.

Is there much measure to help Khrushchev save face? This is always a false premise, and we would be foolish to think about it. The Communists always have little of prestige.

What does the Foreign Office think that after the U-2 incident, the Russians discontinued American aerial surveillance? Even with the ability of aerial photography, it is not always sure. It did not finally establish the fact of offensive bases until three days before the blockade. The Russians might have gotten away with it. They might have concluded that the U.S. would not do anything before Khrushchev arrived in the United States.